Atlanta Constitution - February 6th, 1886.

FOUND GUILTY.

Dr. Armstrong convicted by the Court.

Found Guilty of Violating His Ordination Vows by Failing to Live as an Example for His Flock-Nothing Done Wrong in Longworth Street-General Gossip.

The surmises in yesterday's Constitution touching the trial of Dr. J. G. Armstrong were correct. The doctor was convicted on some of the specifications, but was acquitted on the charges of immoral conduct on Longworth street.

About ten o'clock yesterday morning a young man appeared at St. Philip's rectory bearing the official announcement from the bishop. The communication covered about two pages of letter paper, and was a copy of the verdict of the ecclesiastical court. It said in substance that the doctor was not guilty of the charges of immoral conduct in Longworth street but found him guilty of conduct on other occasions not in accordance with his ordination vows. Just what that was the court did not say. There is official knowledge on the subject but it is generally understood that the findings of the court were by a bare majority and that the minority contended strenously for a verdict of not guilty.

THE BROKEN VOW.

The following is the vow that the doctor has been convicted of violating:

"Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own life and the lives of your family according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ?"

The finding of the court is substantially that Dr. Armstrong conducted himself in a manner inconsistent with and in violation of his ordination vow, but that the testimony establishes no act of adultery.

On this verdict the court authorizes the bishop to suspendDr. Armstrong from his ministrations for such time as the bishop deems best,

NOT TO EXCEED TEN YEARS.

It is understood that this leaves the matter entirely in the discretion of the bishop, who, in view of the absence of any evidence or reason to believe Dr. Armstrong immoral or corrupt, may deem the suspension already had sufficient punishment for the indiscretion, and restore Dr. Armstrong at once to his pulpit and people.

Under the decision of the court the suspension must be temporary. Dr. Armstrong cannot be removed.

While nothing definite has been given to the public, it is said that Dr. Armstrong in replying to the communication of the bishop will again present the facts heard by the court, and will urge either that a new trial be granted or that the court erred in finding against him.

During the day Dr. Armstrong was called on by many friends, among them some of the

MOST PROMINENT MEN

in the city. He was quite cheerful and bore his severe trial bravely. Nothing new can happen in the case until the answer is prepared for the bishop. Further than what has been stated, Dr. Armstrong was not willing to indicate what his course would be, but said he would consult with his counsel, Mr. Hoke Smith, and Senator Davidson, and whatever conclusion he and they might reach, would be properly communicated to the bishop.

A gentleman who is a member of St. Philip's church, and who has been present at the ecclesiastical court from its assembling to its adjournment, and who heard every word that was uttered during the progress of the trial, asserts most positively that there was not one word or line of evidence that reflected unfavorably upon the reputation of Dr. Armstrong as a Christian or a gentleman.

"There was

NO EVIDENCE, WHATEVER,

sustaining the charge of intoxication" said the gentleman. "The exparte statement made several months ago, by the newspaper reporter who first published the scandal in the Cincinnati Post, was admitted by the court at the request of the prosecution, after the reporter who had been brought here to testify had absconded. The testimony of a man named Foote, who 'thought Dr. Armstrong's speedh was thick and his appearance indicative of recovery from disipation' was answered by the testimony of Mr. M. Halstead, who spent an hour with Dr. Armstrong immediately after the time when Foote ~~xxxxxx~~ met him, was positive and unequivocal that Dr. Armstrong was not intexicated, but that his manner

INDICATED ABSOLUTE SOBRIETY.

This testimony the court excluded because Mr. Halstead declined to take the canonical oath. The commissioners who took his testimony, however, certified that he affirmed that he would, and had testified to the exact truth."

"What else?"

"Colonel Hounsel, a well known lawyer of Cincinnati, who was with Dr. Armsfrong at the time Foote met him and who went with him to see Mr. Halstead, also gave his testimony before the commissioners to the fact that Dr. Armstrong was not intoxicated. Mr. Mullaney, ticket agent of the Cincinnati Southern railroad, who was frequently with Dr. Armstrong, while he was in Cincinnati, was before the court in person, and was subjected to rigid cross-examination. He left the stand with his testimony to Dr. Armstrong's sobriety unshaken, so that the charge of intoxication against Dr. Armstrong had no foundation in any testimony whatever, and rested solely upon the exparte statement of the newspaper writer and the impression of Foote that Dr. Armstrong's articulation was thick."

"What was there to rebut that?"

"The positive statements of three respectable gentlemen, Murat Halstead, Colonel Hunsel and Mr. Mullaney."

"What about Hunt's hotel?"

"Mr. Hunt, proprietor of Hunt's hotel, testified to Dr. Armstrong's

HAVING DRANK BEER

in his house, to his own impression that the doctor was under the influence, but refused to swear that he was intoxicated or drunk while there. Two clerks of the house swore positively that Dr. Armstrong was not under the influence of liquor. The fact of Dr. Armstrong visiting the houses in Longworth street was not denied. The evidence was that he took a carriage at his hotel door and ordered the driver to take him to such places; that he went and returned between the hours of ten o'clock in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon, all in the day time. The testimony of the women, as taken before commissioners, and, under cross examination, was that Dr. Armstrong called at their several houses, that he saw none of them alone; stated that he was a clergyman, and was in search of a female relative, who, it was reported to him, had gone astray. That he was perfectly sober, and deported himself as a gentleman. Did not drink while there, but, at their solicitation, gave twenty- five cents that they might treat themselves to beer. This twenty-five cent donation for beer occurred at two places. That he did not remain in either house to exceed thirty minutes and was not at any time alone with any one woman. There was not a word or lineof testimony

TENDING TO SHOW IMMORALITY

on Dr. Armstrong's part during these visits, or that he had any such object or purpose. Therefore the charge that he "visited houses of ill fame for an immoral purpose" was not supported by any evidence whatever. Not even an exparte statement from a woman of bad character. During the progress of the trial Dr. Armstrong gave to the court, confidentially, in the presence of counsel on both sides, the name of his female relative and the circumstances which induced him to seek for her in such a place. It has become known that the report of the lady's having gone astray was entirely erroneous, and that she is now again happily with her husband and family. That brings the case back to the charge of intoxication, which was certainly unsupported by anything rising to the dignity of evidence or testimony, and wqs negatived by positive proof."

The gentleman further said that Dr. Armstrong was chargeable with great indiscretion in his conduct while in Cincinnati. That is not denied either by the doctor or his friends. But that he has been guilty of any act of baseness or immorality they not only deny but challenge the proof. The wardens and vestry were attendants on the proceedings of the ecclesiastical court and the result has been a warmer feeling and a higher admiration for and confidence in their rector.

ANOTHER MEMBER'S VIEWS

Another member of St. Philip's said:

"Any suspension of Dr. Armstrong beyond what would be a reasonable censure for an innocent indiscretion wouldbe regarded by those who know all the facts as indicating a purpose to drive him out of the church. There has been no defection in the parish, and while we deplore the misfortune that has befallen us we do not hold Dr. Armstrong responsible for any greater sin than indiscreet conduct in performing a laudable act. In this we think he has been sufficiently punished by the nearly four months suspension to which Dr. Armstrong has been subjected."
